

INTERNATIONAL CITY MANAGERS' ASSOCIATION
1313 EAST 60TH STREET - CHICAGO 37, ILLINOIS

Report
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USE OF FILMS IN CITY GOVERNMENT

To what extent are films being used by cities, what kinds of films are available, where can they be obtained, and how can they best be used?

Visual aids are being used increasingly, not only in the educational field, but also by government and industry. Many cities are unaware of the potentialities of visual aids or that many films already in existence can be useful management tools.

Films can be useful both in training public employees and in increasing the taxpayer's understanding of local government. Films actually speed up learning. Studies show that people get 75 per cent of their impressions through their eyes and retain what they see 55 per cent better than what they hear. A film can create a favorable learning climate; it is usually welcome and always attracts attention. It can give new meanings to old techniques, it can telescope time and distance, and it can cut across language barriers. No film is a complete information or training device that can be used alone, but it can introduce, reinforce, or supplement what the instructor or narrator has to say.

Films have proved very useful in municipal public relations. By dramatizing municipal activities they further public understanding and encourage public support. They can carry the audiences beyond issues and help citizens take a larger view of the problems of city government. Thus films can effectively supplement speeches, open houses, annual reports, and other information devices.

The purpose of this report is to encourage cities to make wider use of visual aids, especially in connection with in-service training of municipal employees. The city administrator, with the help of his assistant, the personnel director, and department heads can develop a program which should produce good results in in-service training and also in reporting to the public. City officials often can secure expert advice and help from local colleges, universities, or high schools. Many good ideas are set forth in a pamphlet, entitled "Visual Aids," published by the International Harvester Company, which accompanies this MIS report.

Extent of Use. Films and other visual aids have been used by city governments in a variety of ways. Training of new employees and reporting to the public are the most obvious uses. Films and slides also have been used by managers in reporting to the city council. In Detroit slides are used by the assessing board of review as an aid in deciding complaint cases.

A survey by the Public Administration Clearing House late in 1951 showed that 32 cities had used 512 films. San Diego used 101 films; Dallas, Detroit, Los Angeles, and Winnetka (Illinois), used more than 50 films each.

Of these 512 films, 63 were produced by the cities themselves for reporting to the public. Seven cities made films on over-all municipal activities: Burbank and San Mateo, California; Rockland, Maine; Eugene, Oregon; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania;

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Norfolk, Virginia; and Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. A number of cities also have produced films on such subjects as fire prevention, recreational facilities, water supply, traffic safety, and the work of individual city departments.

Most of the films not locally produced were used for in-service training. Traffic safety was the most popular subject with 100 films reported. Other subjects were public health, supervision, human relations, fireman training, water supply and other public works, and first aid, in that order. Winnetka, Illinois, for example, reported that 78 films were used in training firemen. Dallas reported the largest number of films on traffic safety. Detroit, Kansas City (Missouri), Cincinnati, and Jackson (Michigan), reported extensive use of supervisory training films. Los Angeles used the widest variety of films and led the field on health subjects.

Kinds of Films. Visual aids on film include film strips and slides as well as motion pictures. Any of these may be in color or black and white. Motion pictures may be either silent or sound and come in three sizes--8mm., 16mm., and 35mm. Films used in training work are 16mm. sound. Film strips are a series of individual pictures rephotographed on a strip of film to provide continuity. Slides are photographs on 35mm. acetate individually mounted in metal or pasteboard frames. A sound slide film is a slide film accompanied by a recording.

How To Get Films. Potential sources of films include public libraries, university extension libraries, private companies, professional organizations, federal and state agencies, and commercial film-lending libraries. The most comprehensive catalog of film libraries is the United States Office of Education's "A Directory of 2,002 16mm. Film Libraries". This catalog lists 2,002 publicly and privately owned film libraries by states. It gives information on the types of films each library carries, rental rates, and the restrictions, if any, on the loan of films. Copies may be obtained for 30 cents from the Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D.C.

Films for Training City Employees

Almost every kind of employee training can be supplemented by films. Films are currently available, for example, on such subjects as indoctrination of police and fire recruits, telephone courtesy, receiving inquiries and complaints, employee safety, relationships of foremen to employees, handling garbage cans, and filing letters.

Films are especially useful in training where they dramatize specific job operations. They can show the job from start to finish and the relationship of each step in the job to the workers and the end result. A film is most useful when the instructor ties it to a discussion of the job and supplements it with other visual aids such as charts, models, and a blackboard.

Training films to be most effective must be selected to fill a definite need in the training course. This means that they should be carefully previewed before use. The instructor should brief the students on the purpose for which the film is being used and should point out what principles and practices to look for. The film showing should be followed by a discussion of the principles or practices illustrated. When so used films can give emphasis and make abstract principles more realistic; when films are used widely a training session becomes more interesting and students learn more readily.

One of the best sources of information on training films for public employees is the "Directory of Public Service Training Films" published in 1950 at \$1.50 per copy by the Civil Service Assembly (1313 East 60 Street, Chicago 37). Films used

successfully by members of the Civil Service Assembly in some 11 kinds of municipal activities are listed. Entries are annotated, and the names and addresses of distributors are shown.

The 1951 edition of the "Educational Film Guide" with quarterly supplements carries brief descriptions of some 8,000 films in the general fields of education and training. The guide is published by the H. W. Wilson Company, 950 University Avenue, New York 52, at \$5 per year. Lending sources other than the producer generally are not listed. The leading films and film bibliographies in major fields of employee training are summarized below.

Supervisory Training. The United States Office of Education has produced 22 widely-used films for training foremen and other supervisors. These films deal with problems of human relationships in terms of the feelings and actions of people. They are not designed to give final answers, but they suggest ways of meeting problems that provoke thought and discussion. Most of these films are available from local film-lending libraries or from extension divisions of state universities. Film Research Associates (135 West 52 Street, New York 19) has published a bibliography of films taken largely from business, entitled "Improving Human Relations and Supervisory Techniques" (\$1.50).

Public Relations. "By Jupiter," originally produced for Marshall Field and Company, is one of the most widely used films in public relations training. It is available from a number of sources including the Wholesome Film Service, Inc. (20 Melrose Street, Boston). The film depicts courtesy and consideration of fellow employees. The Bell Telephone Companies have a series of three films on telephone courtesy, suitable for all employees who use a telephone. "Good Telephone Usage" contrasts trained and untrained usage; "Telephone Courtesy" depicts good telephone habits; and "Your Telltale Voice" shows how voice inflections reflect the mood of the person talking. These films usually can be obtained through local Bell Telephone offices. "As Others See Us", available through the British Information Service (30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 15), is an excellent and enjoyable lesson in how to greet the public over the counter.

Employee Safety. The National Safety Council (425 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago 11) has a library of films dealing with the proper use of tools, ladders, and safety devices. The "Pete Smith" films depicting dangerous practices in shop work are especially popular. These films can be used to advantage in safety training for laborers, machinists, and motor equipment operators.

Office Practices. Staff Services Bulletin No. 14 of the Film Research Association (135 West 52 Street, New York 19, \$1.50) lists many films for training secretaries, stenographers, and clerical workers. Subjects include taking dictation, filing methods, typing, letter writing, and office etiquette. Films are also available (mostly sponsored by manufacturers) that show shortcuts and special skills in handling almost all types of office machines. One film, "Take A Letter, Please" outlines the common faults of dictators and demonstrates the proper use of dictating machines.

Civil Defense. Two issues of the American City Magazine (May, 1951, pp. 81, 176, and June, 1951, p. 111) list selected civil defense training films available, for the most part, from Army film libraries. Three types of films are listed: post-Korea films produced for the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project, films made in England during World War II, and films made for the armed forces which are adaptable to civil defense training. Fire fighting, first aid, rescue operations, the effects of different types of bombs and incendiaries, and the more widely known "survival" films

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are included. The Federal Civil Defense Administrator, Washington 25, D. C., can provide an "official" listing of about a dozen films.

Fire Protection. The CSA "Directory of Public Service Training Films" lists four films which are especially useful in training firefighters. "Chemistry of Fire" shows the elements that cause a fire and the basic methods of extinguishing fires. "Fight that Fire" instructs firemen in the use of their weapons. "Hose Evolution" describes the hose and hose connections and shows the proper use of hose lines. "Men of Fire" depicts the evolution of firefighting methods and the various phases of fire department work. The National Fire Protection Association (60 Batterymarch Street, Boston 10) issues a catalog that lists many more films on fire prevention and fire protection.

Police Protection. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has an unpublished listing of 28 films on patrolling, traffic control, arrest procedures, public relations, and other police subjects. These films are available for law enforcement agencies only and are distributed direct from FBI headquarters. The California State Department of Education, Sacramento, has published a list of Army and Navy training films which are suitable for police training; these films are also available only to law enforcement officers. The "Directory of Public Service Training Films" lists 11 police training films including films on foot and motorized patrol methods, the use and care of firearms, search and arrest procedures, and the techniques of selective enforcement.

Public Health. The "Directory of Public Service Training Films" lists several films and filmstrips for training food handlers and sanitarians. One film, "Danger Point", describes the health department's role as a guardian of community health. Iowa State University at Iowa City has a listing of films on all phases of hospital administration including public relations, nurses training, personnel management, emergency procedures, medical science, and supply.

Public Works. The American Public Works Association (1313 East 60 Street, Chicago 37) is currently issuing lists of films on a wide variety of subjects including refuse collection, sanitary landfill, sewage treatment, street lighting, ice and snow control, street sweeping, water supply and purification, and vehicle care and maintenance. The APWA discovered that 68 firms manufacturing public works equipment have prepared some 250 films on 28 different subjects. Films that describe equipment and processes are useful in training employees. Loan copies of the APWA lists are available to city officials on request to the headquarters of that Association.

Public Information

These films aim at increasing public understanding of the operations of city government, and they are useful to officials in making talks to local civic groups. They include films giving such specific instructions as how to drive a car, how to prevent fires, etc., and films dealing with major urban problems and policies such as traffic, housing, planning and zoning, juvenile delinquency, and health and welfare. Some films on the services of particular cities have been produced locally with or without outside technical help, but most currently used films in these fields have been produced by educational film companies, federal government agencies, and private business. Such films vary widely in scope and quality and should be previewed with great care. The following paragraphs summarize the types of films available by subject matter and include references to bibliographies of available films.

Fire Prevention. The National Fire Protection Association (60 Batterymarch Street, Boston 10) lists public education films and fireman training films. Its listings cover electrical safety, control of flammable liquids, forest fires, control of

fire in bombing raids, and use of fire extinguishers. The National Board of Fire Underwriters (13 East 37 Street, New York 17) loans films free to officials.

Health and Welfare. Audio Visual Publications, Inc. (812 North Dearborn Street, Chicago 12) has published "Audio Visual Resources for Health and Welfare" which lists films on child care, personal hygiene, dental education, preventive medicine, disease, etc., many of which are useful in public health education. Films on health and welfare also are available, usually without charge, from state health departments and from many education film libraries maintained by local boards of education and public libraries. With the financial support of 16 states a new series of films, entitled "Emotions of Everyday Living," produced by the Mental Health Film Board, are distributed by the International Film Bureau Inc. (57 East Jackson Blvd., Chicago 4).

Juvenile Delinquency. The New York State Juvenile Commission (66 Beaver Street, Albany 7) has published a list of films on this subject. Many of these films are useful for showing in schools and before P.T.A. groups and service clubs.

Planning and Zoning. The American Society of Planning Officials (1313 East 60 Street, Chicago 37) has published "Motion Picture Films on Planning and Housing--A Bibliography" (1951. 50 cents). It includes the best known films on the growth of cities, recreation, sanitation and health, and transportation. Another list is "Films on Housing", published by the Public Housing Administration in Washington (1950).

Traffic Safety. The National Safety Council (425 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago 11) has prepared lists of films on pedestrian safety including bicycle safety, work of school patrols, jay walking, driving practices.

Films Reporting Municipal Activities

Several films of this type have been produced by the cities themselves or by commercial producers under local direction. They generally present day-to-day operations of the city in lieu of or in addition to the annual report. Home-made films have been completed for as little as \$800 for a 45-minute film in color. Commercial productions cost up to \$1,000 (or even more) per minute of running time. Factors affecting cost are charges for the script, length, type (black and white or color), number of copies, quality of the photographs, indoor or outdoor settings, professional or amateur cast, elaborateness of sound effects and sound synchronization.

Silent films are less costly than sound and the user can adapt his remarks to the audience. On the other hand, a sound picture is a more finished product; it is better co-ordinated, and it can be shown without a commentator. A sound movie also has more public appeal and sustains the interest of the audience better.

In silent films, titles may occupy 30 to 40 per cent of the footage. They may indicate lapsed time and if used carefully can bring in facts not photographed. Descriptive titles should not exceed 30 words in length and should contain only one major idea.

Good movies of city activities are not easy to produce. Some rules to follow to produce satisfactory results are: (1) The script should be prepared in advance so that the story will move without faltering. Attention must be given to background, actors, field of vision, lighting effects, speed of movement, sound effects, etc. (2) Someone with experience should make most of the shots. (3) Titles should be informative as well as attention-getting. (4) The original film should not be projected; instead a copy should be made from the original for projection.

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Cities that have recently made movies of municipal activities include: Burbank, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Pasadena, San Diego, Oceanside, and San Mateo, Calif.; Concordia, Kans.; Eugene, Ore.; and Philadelphia, Pa. Burbank's municipal report, "Story of A City", a 33-minute film in color was made by professionals at a cost of \$14,000. San Diego has just produced a 25-minute film in color at a cost of \$7,500. The film is a straight-forward documentary account of city services presented in an entertaining manner.

Eugene produced its own 45-minute color film entitled "A Budget in Action," at a cost of \$900. It tells how the city is spending \$1,400,000 this year for municipal services. It begins with scenes showing the council approving the budget, and then portrays a broad range of municipal operations and closes with plans for the future. The movie, made by city employees with the help of a local photographer, is accompanied by a tape-recorded commentary.

Philadelphia has produced two motion pictures in sound and color, each 15 minutes in length. The first, entitled "Philadelphia--City of Two Million", depicts city services. The second film, "Philadelphia--On The March", includes scenes of various public improvements. The films were produced by a private company under the direction of city officials, and both have been widely used by local civic groups.

San Mateo's 45-minute color sound film, entitled "Your City in Action", begins with an aerial trip over the city followed by a shot of a typical San Mateo home where a postman is delivering a city tax bill. The next scene shows a father explaining the tax bill to his two young sons. Writing a check for the bill he instructs his sons to deliver it to the city hall. Before paying the bill, the boys visit the city manager to find out what the taxes are for. The manager shows them an organization chart of the city government. As he points to each department the scene changes to that department depicting its office and field activities. The film was produced by a local movie club, and the pictures were taken over an eight month period. The narrator, a local business man active in civic affairs, donated his time. The total cost to the city was \$810 including the original and one copy.

Note: Suggestions on the use of projectors and other film equipment are shown on pp. 24-28 of the International Harvester Company manual, "Visual Aids," which accompanies this MIS Report. Instructions on the operation and care of motion picture projectors are contained in "The Projectionist Handbook" published by Business Screen Magazine (7064 Sheridan Road, Chicago, \$1).

There are several ways in which cities can encourage the wider use of films. In Detroit the personnel department has a 16mm. sound motion picture projector and a trained operator which are supplied on request to departments in connection with training employees. In Evanston, Illinois, the city planning commission has prepared a four-page listing of films on community life and development which may be obtained by local civic groups through the office of the commission. Los Angeles, likewise, has provided a listing of films available to local groups from several city departments. The list is prepared and distributed by the Information Center in the city hall.

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